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Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Evaluation of the United Nations Volunteers Programme" (JIU/REP/2003/7).

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EVALUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME

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CONTENTS

	Paragraph	Page
Acronyms		iv
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1-4	1
II. THE UNV MANDATE	5-10	1
III. VOLUNTEER RESOURCES	11-69	3
A. Proportion of volunteers from developing countries	12-18	3
B. Progress in gender representation	19-21	4
C. Participation of the younger generation as volunteers	22-24	4
D. Adequate mix of volunteer assignments	25-26	5
E. The concept and cost of volunteers: are UNVs an alternative to United Nations system staff?	27-41	5
F. Cost-effectiveness of the roster	42-51	8
G. Fielding time	52-54	9
H. Diversity of modalities and conditions of service	55-57	10
I. Management and backstopping of volunteers	58-65	10
J. Training of volunteers	66-69	11
IV. PARTNERSHIPS	70-78	12
A. United Nations partners	73-76	12
B. Cooperating organizations	77-78	13
V. GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND STRUCTURE	79-91	14
VI. STAFF RESOURCES	92-108	15
VII. PROGRAMME AND FINANCIAL PLANNING	109-140	19
A. Programme planning	109-115	19
B. Financial planning	116-119	20
C. Funding arrangements	120-140	20
The biennial support budget	128-131	22
The Special Voluntary Fund	132-133	22
Main contributors	134-137	23
Overhead	138-140	23
VIII. PROGRAMME MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING	141-150	23
IX. OVERSIGHT	151-154	25
ANNEX		26

ACRONYMS

ALD	appointment of limited duration
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation
CMT	Core Management Team
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IAVE	International Association for Voluntary Effort
IBFL	International Business Leader Forum
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IYV	International Year of Volunteers
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
LDC	least developed country
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MYFF	Multi-year Funding Framework
NGO	non-governmental organization
OAPR	Office of Audit and Performance Review
OEC	Office of the Executive Coordinator
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PDOG	Programme Development and Operations Group
RBB	results-based budgeting
ROAR	results-oriented annual report
RONA	Representational Office in North America
SSM	Senior Staff Meeting
SRF	strategic results framework
SSA	special service agreement
SSG	Support Services Group
SVF	Special Voluntary Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITeS	United Nations Information Technology Service
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective
To evaluate the administrative and management structure and methods at UNV, with a view to recommending improvements that could ensure the most efficient use of resources.

INTRODUCTION (chapter I)

A. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme was created in 1971 to serve as an operational partner in development cooperation. Although administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNV enjoys a large degree of managerial and funding autonomy and has proved to be a dynamic and fast-responding programme to changing and expanded demands, with a high degree of commitment to continuous improvement (paras. 1-4).

MANDATE (chapter II)

B. Over the years, the original UNV mandate of development cooperation has evolved to support United Nations involvement in humanitarian and emergency relief, peace-building and electoral support activities. More recently, it has been expanded as a result of UNV being assigned as focal point for the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) and for promoting volunteerism. In responding to this evolving and expanded mandate, UNV programme activities, the number of volunteers, its network of partners and cooperating agencies, its financial resources and staff have considerably increased. Its profile, distinctive image and core values have been raised (paras. 5-10).

VOLUNTEER RESOURCES (chapter III)

C. The goal of as wide a geographical representation as possible for the recruitment and assignment of volunteers has been achieved to the extent that a majority of volunteers are recruited and serve in developing countries. Despite this wide geographical representation, 38 countries are not represented, whereas some countries are highly represented. It is not clear on what basis UNV management has set a target ratio of 2/1 volunteers from developing and industrialized countries. The percentage of volunteers from developing countries suffered a steady decrease from 1992 to 2002 when a break point was registered. This decrease was attributed to the "full funding" of their own national volunteers by some industrialized countries and the even lower ratio of industrialized to developing candidates in the roster, the main source of recruiting volunteers (paras. 11-18).

D. The gender representation of serving volunteers has significantly improved during the last 10 years, though it has been stagnant at 37 per cent since 1998. The UNV ratio of between 40/60 and 50/40 women/men serving volunteers is not in line with the United Nations-approved goal for gender representation of 50-50 (paras. 19-21).

E. Some UNV cooperating organizations feel that the high recruitment standards set by the programme prevent young people from serving. In order to increase the participation of youth, UNV has set up a pilot internship programme in cooperation with Italy and is also developing programmes with universities to involve students in volunteer activities (paras. 22-24).

F. Although the number of national UNVs has notably increased since 1996, when the modality was in its initial stages, the national UNV modality remains unexplored in 55 countries. National volunteers are not only four times less costly than their international counterparts, but they can have a significant impact on community mobilization projects, given their knowledge of local conditions (paras. 25-26).

Recommendation 1

UNV management should continue improving the representation of volunteers from under represented developing countries, women, youth and national volunteers through:

(a) Seeking guidance from the UNDP Executive Board on what it considers the appropriate classification/ratio of volunteers from developing and industrialized countries;
(b) Requesting donors to increase the number of fully-funded volunteers from under represented developing countries;
(c) Undertaking a more proactive approach for "rostering" women candidates from specific countries;
(d) Aligning the UNV gender target to the approved United Nations goal and establishing incremental targets to reach the ultimate goal of a 50-50 gender balance;
(e) Extending the internship programme with the participation of other donors;
(f) Identifying certain types of activities of a less complex nature where the younger generation can play a more active role as volunteers, not only as interns; and
(g) Encouraging the employment of national UNVs by partners, in particular in countries where this modality is still unexplored, so as to achieve an adequate mix of national/international volunteers at the country level.

G. Some UNV cooperating agencies are of the opinion that the idea of volunteerism could be undermined by expectation of personal financial gain. At the other extreme, there is a perceived risk in volunteers being considered as "cheap labour", an alternative to United Nations system staff. In recent years, more and more United Nations organizations have resorted to the use of UNVs to respond to increasing staffing needs and/or to compensate for staffing cuts. Although this is not the primary consideration, the fact is that UNVs are cost-effective, can do the same job as United Nations staff for lower remuneration and can be deployed within a short period of time without the constraints of the lengthy United Nations recruitment process (paras. 27-36).

H. There is a need for clarification and harmonization of the role and functions of UNVs and the immunities and privileges granted to them in the performance of their functions (paras. 37-41).

Recommendation 2

In order to address the concerns about and conflicting views on the issue of the cost, concept and functions of UNVs, UNV management should:

(a) Undertake a comprehensive review of the allowances granted to its volunteers, in comparison with other volunteer-sending organizations, and identify any other element specific to the UNV that should be reflected in the level of remuneration;
(b) Seek the guidance of the UNDP Executive Board, for the sake of transparency and fairness and to obtain acceptance of the results of the review prior to introducing any changes, as appropriate;
(c) Clearly define with UNV partners the functions, responsibilities and authority that can be delegated to UNVs within the scope of the agreements in process with them; and
(d) With the assistance of UNDP and the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs: (i) clarify the issue of the status, privileges and immunities that could and should be granted to UNVs in the performance of their functions and include the appropriate references in the memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with UNV partners; and (ii) consider the possibility of providing UNVs with a laissez-passer akin to the United Nations officials document, specifying the extent of immunities and privileges granted to them.

I. The rostering of UNV applicants was a labour-intensive data-entry process until 2001 when an online application system was introduced whereby web applications are automatically downloaded with minimal manual input. The Inspector assessed the cost-effectiveness of the Cyprus Processing Centre in rostering UNV candidates and found that the Centre was a well-run operation with effective controls in place.

However, the staffing of the office may need to be reviewed, taking into account further productivity gains achieved and cost and time indicators introduced and closely monitored by the roster manager to better measure and assess the efficiency of operations. The roster composition in terms of gender and countries represented could be improved through a more proactive rather than reactive rostering policy (paras. 42-51).

Recommendation 3

UNV management should encourage wider use of the online application system and closely monitor its impact on the office workload. Measurement and cost indicators should be introduced for processing applications in order to assess the cost-effectiveness of operations properly. UNV should fine-tune its "rostering" policy to ensure that the available offer meets existing and changing demands, gender goals and as wide a geographical representation as possible.

J. Management of the UNV programme in the field and backstopping serving volunteers is assigned to UNV programme managers in United Nations missions and to programme officers in the UNDP-based country office. Where no designated programme officer or manager exists, a UNV focal point is designated at the relevant UNDP country office to represent UNV and deal with the administration of volunteers. No terms of reference for the UNV focal point's responsibilities have been developed in writing and it is unclear how the effectiveness of this function is measured. The Inspector questioned the rationale of maintaining programme officers in locations where a reduced number of volunteers is serving and suggested that the need for maintaining a UNV field presence should be assessed against the possibility of resorting to the UNDP-based focal point, assuming this responsibility functions effectively (paras. 58-63).

K. Realizing the importance of the programme officers as front-line managers, and in order to address the need for training raised recurrently in evaluations, in 2003 UNV introduced a capacity-development programme aimed at enhancing the competence of programme officers. It has also developed guidelines to build up a roster of qualified candidates and for the recruitment of programme officers and has implemented a new volunteer periodic reporting system, whereby feedback from volunteers may be obtained about support and assistance received during their specific assignments (paras. 64-69).

Recommendation 4

UNV management should assess the cost-effectiveness of the programme officer and programme manager function in each specific country/mission and evaluate the adequacy of backstopping in countries where no country team exists.

PARTNERSHIPS (chapter IV)

L. UNV has established an extensive network of partners with the United Nations, its funds and programmes, Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Although the United Nations, its funds and programmes, are by far the main UNV partner, in recent years UNV has been exploring new partnerships with the European Union and non-traditional partners, involving transnational corporations and national private companies in volunteer development activities. Agreements have been concluded or are ongoing with a number of such entities. The Inspector sees these agreements as a tool to strengthen this network of partners and to ensure that a common framework of rules and procedures governs all UNV engagements in a consistent manner. It is necessary to develop guidelines for the involvement of UNVs in activities with these partners to dissipate any misunderstanding on the use and concept of volunteers. Establishing a network of focal points and maintaining contact with them for developing guidance on the management and administration of UNVs and disseminating information are also important (paras. 70-78).

Recommendation 5

UNV should formalize/revitalize its relationship with partners by reviewing the existing administrative and operational arrangements and agreements, establishing new ones, and setting up a network of focal points, as applicable.

GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND STRUCTURE (chapter V)

M. The governance of UNV, as a programme of UNDP, derives from the UNDP Executive Board. Limited guidance has, however, been provided by the Board in programmatic or financial issues in recent years, partly because the UNV programme planning, evaluation and reporting system is embedded in the UNDP system and also because the Biennial Report of the Administrator does not go into the level of detail which would prompt a substantive discussion on programme and management issues. Given the programme attachment to UNDP, steps towards more active UNV/UNDP corporate management are encouraged (paras. 79-80).

N. Day-to-day management is entrusted to the Executive Coordinator, assisted by a Deputy. Although in practice the division of responsibilities between these officials functioned well, it was not formalized in writing. A participatory style of management has been developed through annual staff retreats, formal and informal contacts with staff representatives, and senior management consultations. The latter are conducted through meetings of the Core Management Team (CMT) and the Senior Staff Meeting (SSM) whose effectiveness should be improved through regular gatherings, a more focused agenda on the implementation of the business plan, and adequate follow-up and feedback on actions taken. Decisions are ultimately taken by top management and communicated to the staff by e-mail; there is no formalized system of issuing, disseminating and filing administrative decisions. Structure and reporting arrangements occasionally appear to be more based on individual profiles and skills than on managerial or organizational logic. Some reporting lines could be realigned and units merged (paras. 81-91).

Recommendation 6

Existing management practices and tools at UNV should be strengthened through:

(a) More frequent meetings and fine-tuned agendas of the SSM and CMT;
(b) Clearly-defined division of responsibilities between the Executive Coordinator and the Deputy Executive Coordinator and reporting lines to them, which should be communicated to all the staff;
(c) Systematic and orderly recording and distribution of management decisions, as appropriate, in the form of administrative issuances; and
(d) Consolidation of units and redefinition of the reporting lines.

STAFF RESOURCES (chapter VI)

O. Management of human resources has suffered from the absence of an organizational strategy, effective leadership at mid-level and a reliable database. Although some progress was registered in 2002 and 2003 when the newly appointed head of human resources developed a draft policy paper, implemented a comprehensive staff development programme and introduced an interim database, there remains much to do. At the time of finalization of this report the Unit had embarked on intensive data entry for the implementation of the human resources module of the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software foreseen for January 2004 (paras. 96-98, 108).

P. To meet the incremental needs of the office after the discontinuation by UNDP of the staffing formula that related the number of serving volunteers to the support capacity at headquarters, UNV enjoyed a high degree of flexibility to hire staff under different contracting arrangements with extrabudgetary funding. Appointments of limited duration and L project personnel under the 200 series of the Staff Rules have

thus proliferated to the extent that they account for more than one third of actual staffing. Staff so engaged were placed in core functions or hired against vacant established posts (paras. 92-94, 101-106).

Q. In contrast with the practice of creating posts/positions outside staffing table control, the vacancy rate for regular posts was high in 2001 and 2002. If vacant/frozen posts relate to functions that are no longer needed, they should be reallocated, reclassified or abolished (para. 95).

R. There is an evident imbalance in the geographical representation of staff. In addition, although in 2000 UNV ranked among the highest in the United Nations and its funds and programmes as regards the proportion of professional women with 39 per cent, no progress has been achieved in recent years towards meeting the 50 per cent United Nations target (paras. 99-100).

Recommendation 7

UNV management should finalize and implement a human resources management strategy that encompasses policies and targets to address the need for:

(a) Improving geographical representation of staff and gender balance;
(b) Streamlining its recruitment practices through adequate use of the various types of appointment;
(c) Filling, reclassifying or abolishing vacant posts as appropriate; and
(d) Consolidating the existing staff development plan.

Recommendation 8

The UNV Biennial Report of the Administrator to the UNDP Executive Board should regularly include a chapter on UNV human resource management and provide comparative statistical data on the number of posts, funding sources and contracting arrangements, the geographical distribution of professional staff and the gender balance.

PROGRAMME AND FINANCIAL PLANNING (chapter VII)

S. UNV lacks a long-term strategic planning document and needs to fine-tune its instruments of medium and short-term planning. UNV programming in principle follows the goals and strategic areas of support in the UNDP strategic results framework (SRF) translated into seven key goals in the three-year rolling Business Plan. Though updates to this Plan are to be made after the senior staff retreat organized in February of each year, as at May 2003, the unit plans for the year were still in draft form. The Plan contains objectives, deliverables and activities by goal but no indicators or time-frame/deadlines for completion of activities. It foresees as many as 179 activities for execution without assigning a degree of priority to them, designating a responsible official or indicating a deadline for implementation. While UNV is not applying results-based budgeting (RBB), it is expected that it will be introduced in the context of the ongoing ERP exercise. Without RBB it is unclear how resources are assigned to meet expected results (paras. 109-115).

Recommendation 9

UNV should improve long-term, intermediate and short-term planning through:

(a) Devising a long-term planning strategy that summarizes in a short strategic paper, the concepts developed in the UNV mission statement and the seven key planning goals;
(b) Focusing each year of the three-year rolling Business Plan on a more limited number of high priority activities, and trying to achieve a balance between ongoing activities and new initiatives and projects;

(c) Completing the updating of annual plans during the first quarter of the year, indicating the degree of priority for each activity, success indicators and time-frames/deadlines for delivery; and

(d) Implementing RBB to ensure that resources are allocated in line with programme priorities and expected results.

T. Financial planning is a separate exercise at UNV. There is no link between the Business Plan and the biennial budget cycle and no correlation between objectives, resources, and outcomes. Neither is there a detailed UNV budget. The totality of UNV resources needed/used for both programme and support activities during the past and current biennium is disclosed in a table called "UNV resource planning table - projected resource availability and utilization of resources" presented in an annex to the Biennial Report of the Administrator to the UNDP Executive Board. The UNDP Executive Board does not approve, take note or make any reference to this resource planning table in its decision concerning the Report of the Administrator. Regular resources under the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) are not submitted to legislative body approval though the activities financed by the Fund are mandated by Executive Board decisions. The information in the UNV planning table is not detailed enough to provide a transparent overview or to permit appropriate legislative guidance (paras. 116-119).

Recommendation 10

UNV should improve the presentation of its "Projected resource availability and utilization of resources" in the Report of the Administrator by including the information referred to in paragraph 119.

U. Although UNV has not devised a funding strategy, income and expenditures have steadily increased over the years, exceeding the increase in the number of UNVs and it thus enjoys a relatively "healthy" financial situation. This is so because of the nature of the funding, whereby secure funds are provided for about 80 per cent of total UNV expenditures in the form of appropriations from the UNDP budget to the UNV biennial support budget and reimbursement for services to third parties charged directly, mainly to the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). However, the decline over the years of the UNDP contribution to the biennial support budget, which serves to finance a core management structure at UNV headquarters, and the increasing dependence of the programme on peacekeeping/building activities, constitutes factors that should be addressed in a coherent programme and funding strategy. Cash contributions, which are less predictable, tend to increase, although they are not always received in a timely manner. Private sector funding has modestly increased, whereas contributions to the SVF have not experienced the same progress (paras. 120-137).

Recommendation 11

UNV management should devise a funding strategy to address: (a) the decrease in the biennial support budget; (b) the optimal level of funding and use of the SVF; (c) the untimely receipt of contributions from donors; and (d) the potential for an increase in private sector fund raising.

PROGRAMME MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING (chapter VIII)

V. The results of UNV programme activities are presented every two years in the Report of the UNDP Administrator to the UNDP Executive Board and in an annual informative report, prepared for general public distribution, on the major activities and developments during the year. The presentation of these reports follows the categories of the UNDP SRF, and not the specific goals of the UNV Business Plan. UNV activities are also presented/disseminated within the context of the UNDP reporting process in tandem with other UNDP activities. In general, the thrust of these reports is informative; and in order for them to play a meaningful role they should be more analytical (para. 141).

W. No effective mechanism exists to monitor, evaluate and measure the result and impact of UNV activities against established goals and objectives in the Business Plan. The implementation of this Plan should be monitored quarterly during the SSMs but it is not. The absence of effective monitoring mechanisms and of a focus on a more manageable number of activities resulted in delays in the implementation of projects and tasks. After the decision to reinforce the evaluation function in 1998, numerous strategic and project reviews have been undertaken by external consultants. However no monitoring has been carried out on the implementation of their recommendations. The implementation of any effective follow-up tool has been postponed until the launching of the second wave of ERP to see how much of it could be used for monitoring purposes. Further, despite the decision that from mid-2003, the Evaluation Unit would report to the SSM on the implementation of the Evaluation Plan and the status of follow-up to evaluations, this has not been done. More than one third of the evaluations foreseen in the 2002 Evaluation Plan were postponed or cancelled. Completion of the evaluation guidelines has also been delayed (paras. 142-148).

Recommendation 12

As a matter of priority, UNV management should take the following actions to enhance programme monitoring, evaluation and reporting:

(a) The Biennial Report should be more analytical in presenting the results of programme implementation;
(b) An annual report should be prepared measuring results against established objectives and goals in the UNV Business Plan;
(c) Effective programme monitoring should be exercised through quarterly reviews of the implementation of the annual Business Plan in the SSMs;
(d) UNV should determine whether ERP would serve the purpose of monitoring the implementation of evaluations' recommendations and on that basis, take an informed decision on the need to develop a separate follow-up system; and
(e) The SSMs should include in their agenda a quarterly report on the status of implementation of the Evaluation Plan and follow-up on the resulting evaluations.

X. Following the discontinuation a few years ago of the previous system, which was not very cost-effective and the subject of some criticism, a new volunteer reporting system was introduced in April 2003 to obtain feedback from volunteers. The new system could also serve to address concerns regarding the need to assess better the impact of volunteers' work. For the system to be effective, however, compliance needs to be enforced, particularly for supervisors. At the time of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) review in September 2003, the response rate was 35 per cent for volunteers and 10 per cent for supervisors (paras.149-150).

Recommendation 13

UNV should seek to identify the reasons for the low response from users to the new volunteer reporting system and take the necessary measures to enforce compliance. Further, UNV should study how this system could be used to address the concerns regarding the need to assess better the impact of the volunteers' work.

OVERSIGHT (chapter IX)

Y. Among the various UNDP oversight mechanisms with competence over UNV, the United Nations Board of Auditors provides external oversight to UNV in connection with the biennial certification of UNDP accounts, and periodically reports to the UNDP Executive Board, whereas the UNDP Office of Audit and Performance Review (OAPR) performed the last internal audit of UNV six years ago in 1997. Prior to this exercise, no internal audit had been carried out for many years. OAPR also in principle provides investigation functions. It is, however, unclear whether UNVs serving with other United

Nations funds and programmes and specialized agencies fall under the purview of the investigation service of the relevant offices (paras. 151-154).

Recommendation 14

UNDP/OAPR should institute a regular oversight review cycle for UNV to ensure appropriate coverage of UNV activities.

Recommendation 15

UNV should seek to define, within the context of the agreements with different partners, the modalities of relevant investigation services into UNV activities.

"At the heart of volunteerism are the ideals of service and solidarity and the belief that together we can make the world a better place. In that sense, we can say that volunteerism is the ultimate expression of what the United Nations is all about."

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme was created with effect from 1 January 1971[1] to serve as an operational partner in development cooperation. Its headquarters was originally located in New York, subsequently moved to Geneva and, since 1996, has been based in Bonn. Although administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNV enjoys a large degree of autonomy and has proved to be a dynamic and fast-responding programme to changing and expanded demands, with a high degree of commitment to continuous improvement.

2. The objective of the present review is to evaluate its administrative and management structure and methods, with a view to recommending improvements that could ensure the most efficient use of resources. The scope of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report is limited to the following areas: mandate; volunteer resources management; partnerships; management structure; human resources management; programme planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting; and oversight. In preparing the report, documentation available online and provided by UNV was reviewed and intensive consultations held with UNV management. Two short missions to UNV Bonn and an assessment visit to the Processing Centre in Nicosia were conducted. Questionnaires were sent and meetings organized with a number of UNV partners. Their comments have been included in this report, as appropriate.

3. Although this is the first time that JIU has undertaken a review of the UNV programme, in a prior report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system capacity for conflict prevention", the Inspectors recommended more extensive use of UNVs in "order to enhance United Nations system activities addressing root causes of conflicts".[2]

4. The Inspector wishes, first and foremost, to record his gratitude to the former UNV Executive Director, Ms. Sharon Capeling-Alakija whose dedication and contribution to the programme knew no bounds and whose untimely death has deprived it of a visionary leader. The Inspector's appreciation also goes to all those who assisted him in the preparation of this report and the organization of the missions and, in particular, to the UNV officials who invariably responded with an open and frank spirit in the course of interviews held and in responding to the questionnaires.

II. THE UNV MANDATE

5. In deciding to establish the UNV programme, the General Assembly in its resolution 2659 (XXV) of 7 December 1970, expressed its conviction

that the active participation of the younger generation in all aspects of social and economic life constitutes an important factor in ensuring the increased effectiveness of collective efforts necessary for a better society, ... also that voluntary service in development assistance activities is a rewarding form of such participation and one that can make a substantial contribution to their success by the provision of an additional source of trained manpower, provided that:

(a) Such service is well planned and directed, utilizes volunteers recruited and serving on as wide a geographical basis as possible, including in particular the developing countries, and the necessary resources are made available,

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[1] United Nations General Assembly resolution 2659 (XXV) of 7 December 1970.
[2] JIU/REP/1995/13, recommendation 11.

(b) Volunteers have the technical and personal qualifications required for the development of recipient countries, including the transfer of skills,

(c) Volunteers are not sent to a country without the explicit request and approval of the recipient Governments concerned, ...

6. To this end, the Coordinator of UNV is

to promote and co-ordinate the recruitment, selection, training and administrative management of the activities of the United Nations Volunteers within the United Nations system in collaboration with the United Nations agencies concerned and in co-operation with organizations dealing with national and international voluntary service and, where appropriate, with relevant youth organizations;

7. Over the years, the original mandate of development cooperation has remained at the heart of UNV programme implementation, but it has evolved to support United Nations involvement in humanitarian and emergency relief, peace-building and electoral support activities.[3] In 2002, 37 per cent of volunteers' assignments were in the area of governance, 32 per cent in providing humanitarian relief and peace-building assistance, 20 per cent in poverty reduction, and 11 per cent served other purposes, such as support to the United Nations system, gender and environment.[4] The United Nations contribution to UNV activities, other than that of its parent organization UNDP, has increased progressively to the extent that it accounts today for about 50 per cent of UNV funding.[5]

8. The UNV mandate was recently expanded when the General Assembly proclaimed the year 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers[6] (IYV 2001), and UNV was assigned focal point for the year[7] and for promoting volunteerism. Among the recommendations put forward by the General Assembly on support for volunteering following IYV 2001,[8] is the request that

the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, further support voluntary activities by creating a favourable environment, including through: ... Assisting in building national capacities, including in the field of training [and in this regard] Recognize the continuing role of the United Nations Volunteers as the volunteer arm of the United Nations system, placing volunteers in development and humanitarian programmes and promoting online volunteering. Build on the acquired experience of the United Nations Volunteers in enhancing the recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteering, deriving from its role as focal point for the International Year of Volunteers.

9. Further, in 2002, the General Assembly[9] welcomed

the work of the United Nations Volunteers, as the focal point for the International Year of Volunteers, as well as their role in the preparations and implementation of the Year, and request[ed] them to continue their efforts, together with other stakeholders, to raise awareness of volunteerism, increase reference and networking resources available and provide technical cooperation to developing countries, upon their request, in the field of volunteerism.

10. IYV led UNV to carry out a "rebranding" exercise. As part of this exercise, UNV reassessed its position and role as a partner in development and an advocate for volunteerism. More recently, UNV realigned its programme to place volunteerism within the context of the Millennium Development Goals: "... UNV provides a window of opportunity for qualified global citizens, whatever their origins, to share their expertise and to demonstrate solidarity with and support for the aspirations of the Millennium Declaration."[10] In responding to this "expanded" mandate, UNV programme activities, the number of volunteers, its network of partners and cooperating agencies, its financial resources and staff have considerably increased. Its profile, distinctive image and core values have been raised.

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[3] UNDP Governing Council decisions 92/20 and 92/35, and UNDP Executive Board decisions and 94/9 and 96/32.
[4] This classification is based on the strategic results framework (SRF) of UNDP.
[5] UNVs first participated in a United Nations field mission in early 1991 in the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia and since then have served in 19 peacekeeping operations (A/55/697 of 18 December 2000, paras. 2-3).
[6] General Assembly resolution 52/17 of 20 November 1997.
[7] Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/44 of 22 July 1997, para. 3.
[8] General Assembly resolution 56/38 of 5 December 2001, annex, sect. III.1.
[9] Resolution 57/106 of 26 November 2002, para. 8.
[10] www.unvolunteers.org/infobase/articles - "Volunteerism and the Millennium Development Goals: an opportunity and an imperative".

III. VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

11. UNV has been successful in meeting its original mandate, as reflected in paragraphs 6 and 7 above. UNV clients are unanimous in praising the commitment and competence of UNVs, their qualifications and experience. The geographical representation aim has also been largely achieved with a majority of volunteers recruited and serving in developing countries. Notwithstanding these achievements, there are some aspects of the recruitment, selection, training and management of volunteers that need fine-tuning, as discussed further in this report.

A. Proportion of volunteers from developing countries

12. According to the *UNV Annual Report*, in 2002, there were 5,432 volunteers serving in 139 countries. By region, 38 per cent served in Africa, 32 per cent in Asia and the Pacific, 13 per cent in Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), 11 per cent in Latin America/Caribbean and 6 per cent in the Arab States.

13. These volunteers originated from 158 countries: 70 per cent from developing countries and 30 per cent from industrialized countries. The number of countries of recruitment increased by 25 per cent from 1992 to 2002.

14. Despite this wide geographical representation, the percentage of volunteers from developing countries had suffered a steady decrease during the previous 10-year period: from 76 per cent in 1992 to 66 per cent in 2001. However, a break point was registered in 2002 with 70 per cent of volunteers coming from developing countries.

Table 1. Countries of origin of volunteers and assignments

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total UNVs	3,379	3,590	3,502	3,263	3,242	3,620	3,643	4,383	4,780	5,090	5,432
Countries of assignment	124	134	136	136	136	147	148	139	140	136	139
Countries of origin	126	130	125	125	125	144	141	149	157	160	158
From industrialized countries	24%	28%	27%	26%	28%	30%	32%	36%	33%	34%	30%
From developing countries	76%	72%	73%	74%	72%	70%	68%	64%	67%	66%	70%

15. One contributing factor to the decline of volunteers from developing countries, reflected in the table above was that some industrialized countries have been "fully funding" between 5 and 8 per cent of total serving volunteers (362 in 1999, 272 in 2002 and 165 for the first half of 2003), basically with their own nationals, though some donors have also fully funded volunteers from developing countries (a total of 52 to date). Notwithstanding these efforts and the advantages of full funding, the Inspector underscores the importance of continuing to encourage donors to fund fully volunteers from developing countries as well, in order to keep as wide a geographical balance as possible.

16. Another factor to be considered is the even lower ratio of industrialized/developing country candidates in the roster, which is the main source of recruiting volunteers. At the end of 2002, 61 per cent of the 4,207 candidates in the roster were from developing countries and 39 per cent from industrialized countries. By mid-2003, the percentage of developing country candidates increased by 1.8 per cent because, in anticipation of future recruitments, the roster was boosted with candidates from a specific region.

17. There is also potential for improving the number of nationalities in the roster of candidates (169) and of serving UNVs (158) since 38 countries remained unrepresented and 41 countries had less than three candidates. Certain countries, on the contrary, were highly represented. The top 10, with more than 100 candidates, were: Canada, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Nepal, UK and USA.

18. UNV management pointed out that the aim is to reach a distribution of 1/3–2/3 volunteers from industrialized-developing countries. It is unclear, however, what the basis of such a ratio is. Consequently, the Inspector is of the opinion that UNV should seek the guidance of the UNDP Executive Board on what it considers the appropriate representation of volunteers from developing and industrialized countries.

B. Progress in gender representation

19. The gender representation of serving volunteers has significantly improved during the last 11 years from 22 per cent female volunteers in 1992 to 37 per cent in 2002, as shown in the table below. While UNV management indicated that it had set a ratio in a range of from 40/60 to 60/40, this is not in line with the United Nations-approved goal for gender representation of 50-50. In fact, the Inspector noted that no improvement in the gender balance had been registered since 1998.

Table 2. Gender representation (1992-2002)
(Percentage)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Female	22	26	27	30	33	35	37	36	35	37	37
Male	78	74	73	70	67	65	63	64	65	63	63

20. Lack of progress in recent years was explained by the increase in the programme's participation in peacekeeping missions where the number of participating women is lower, as compared to development activities. At the time of this review, by geographical area of serving volunteers in development activities, the highest percentages of women were from Latin America (50/50) and the Arab region (44/54), followed by Europe and CIS countries (40/60) and Asia (36/64), the lowest being Africa (31/69).[11]

21. Notwithstanding the difficulties in finding women from developing countries available to undertake long-term assignments, the Inspector is of the opinion that UNV should be more proactive in conducting special recruitment campaigns for women in specific countries.

C. Participation of the younger generation as volunteers

22. The Inspector also assessed the requirement of the originating General Assembly resolution of ensuring the "active participation of the younger generation" as volunteers, in the light of the concerns expressed by some UNV cooperating organizations that the high recruitment standards set by the programme prevent young people from serving.[12] The Inspector found that this concern was valid to the extent that the average age of serving volunteers is 39 years, their work experience 10 years and that 90 per cent of international UNVs have a first university degree or equivalent diploma.

23. UNV management clarified that neither the original mandate of promoting the participation of the younger generation, nor the requirement of a minimum of five years work experience had been changed. However, it was acknowledged that a shift had occurred in the second part of the 1980s, when the term

[11]Figures as at 19 September 2003, date of the last SSM at which this issue was discussed.
[12]Francesca Taylor, "Second follow-up review of UNV collaboration with cooperating organisations" (December 2001), p. 10.

"UNV specialist" was introduced in response to demands from recipient countries for more qualified/experienced personnel.

24. In order to improve the participation of the younger generation, in 2000 UNV set up a pilot internship programme, in cooperation with Italy. So far, 55 UNV interns have been fielded to more than 30 countries on 12-month assignments. UNV has negotiated with the donor country to finance interns from developing countries as well in the future. Some other countries have expressed interest in participating in this programme. UNV has also developed some projects with universities involving youth in voluntary activities in poor areas. These efforts to increase the participation of youth in volunteer activities are well noted and, in the Inspector's view, should be expanded in the future by identifying certain types of activities or less complex functions where the younger generation can play a more active role as volunteers and not only as interns.

D. Adequate mix of volunteer assignments

25. The above-mentioned 5,432 volunteers in 2002 undertook 5,554 assignments, of which 67 per cent were international assignments and 33 per cent were national assignments. The number of national UNVs has notably increased since 1996 when the modality was in its initial stages. National volunteers are not only four times less costly than their international counterparts, but they can have a significant impact on community mobilization projects, given their knowledge of local conditions. On the other hand, international volunteers can bring expertise not available in the country and contribute to building up national capacity.

26. Achieving an adequate mix of national/international volunteers would be the more cost-effective option for the employment of UNVs. Some important UNV partners such as UNDP and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) employ a higher proportion of national UNVs. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is also progressively utilizing more national volunteers.[13] However, in many countries the national UNV modality is still unexplored. In 2002, in 55 countries there were no national UNVs.

See Recommendation 1

E. The concept and cost of volunteers: are UNVs an alternative to United Nations system staff?

27. The Inspector has observed a range of varying perceptions and conflicting views with regard to the concept and cost of volunteers, which need to be addressed. Some UNV cooperating agencies are of the opinion that the idea of volunteerism could be undermined by the expectation of personal financial gain. They also perceived a risk of volunteers being considered "cheap labour", an alternative to United Nations system staff.

28. Notwithstanding the merits and achievements of the UNV programme, the "Second follow-up review of UNV collaboration with cooperating organisations", carried out by an individual consultant in 2001, pointed out that some organizations felt

> that it is very difficult to ascribe the term 'volunteer' to international UN Volunteers recruited from developing countries and involved in South-South exchanges. This is because their key motivation is understandably most likely to be financial gain given the differential in salary level between what is offered by UNV and what they could earn in their own country... more UN Volunteers from the North are now motivated by the same rewards because of the improved terms and conditions offered by UNV.

The same review went on to note that "the issue of UN Volunteers being used as a cheap labour alternative to JPOs or UN professional staff" is due to "the high educational and professional criteria currently set by UNV for recruitment of UN Volunteers [which] can often make it attractive for UN

[13] National UNV assignments in 2002: UNDP/UNV 53 per cent; UNHCR 28 per cent; UNOPS 65 per cent.

organisations to employ them as cost-effective professional experts rather than for any meaningful reason linked to their being volunteers".[14]

29. The United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in a recent audit of the use of UNVs at UNHCR[15] expressed concern that the use of UNVs "may be driven by the search for a source of inexpensive labour, particularly in light of UNHCR's current financial position. In the view of OIOS, this could undermine the idea of volunteerism". OIOS also stated that "Considering the average age of a UNV is 39, and over 60 per cent come from developing countries where the salary scales are generally low in contrast to standard UNV entitlements, the term volunteer may mean different things to different people".

30. It is true that in recent years, more and more United Nations organizations have resorted to the use of UNVs to respond to increasing staffing needs and/or to compensate for staffing cuts. Although this is not the primary consideration, the fact is that UNVs are cost-effective, can do the same job as United Nations staff for less salary and can be deployed within a short period of time without the constraints of the lengthy United Nations recruitment process. While UNVs are not staff members, they are often called on to perform some core functions of the organizations. In the performance of their duties, UNVs are bound by Rules of Conduct, which are very similar to those of regular staff.

31. The Secretary-General, in his report on participation of United Nations Volunteers in peacekeeping operations, while also acknowledging that "the cost-effectiveness of the UNV modality is an important factor to consider when planning mission-specific staff requirements", added, "this factor is not seen as the defining characteristic of the programme's strengths ... the key contribution of the UNV programme is its ability to quickly mobilize international volunteers with the relevant skills and experience to carry out functions essential to field operations and to support them in the field".[16] Other United Nations partners of UNV interviewed by JIU concurred with this appreciation.

32. UNHCR records the advantages of the use of UNVs in its Annual Programme Budget 2004[17]as follows:

As deployment of international UNVs proved successful and became mainstreamed, appreciation of their professional performance grew apace, as well as UNHCR's reliance on them to a level beyond what could normally be expected of "volunteers". UNHCR also increasingly resorted to national UNVs, whose deployment is simpler and less costly in comparison to that of international UNVs.

33. On the other hand, the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations[18] referring to the use of UNVs in these operations warned that "using United Nations Volunteers as a form of cheap labour risks corrupting the programme and can be damaging to mission morale", since UNVs "work alongside colleagues who are making three or four times their salary for similar functions".

34. A feasibility study carried out in 1970, prior to the creation of UNV,[19] defined a volunteer as a person whose "aspirations for a better world include wanting to work for it" and a person "who gives his services without regard to financial benefit" and estimated the local living expenses of an (international) volunteer[20] at between US$ 1,500 and US$ 3,000 annually. The estimate was based on the then average costs of many volunteer-sending organizations, taking into account the degree to which some recipient Governments might be expected to contribute towards those costs. In 2002, the volunteer living allowance was US$ 18,000 for international volunteers and US$ 6,200 for national volunteers. Taking

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[14]Taylor, loc. cit., p. 9-10.
[15]Audit Report 02/025 of 28 November 2002, paras. 13 and 14-18.
[16]A/55/697 of 18 December 2000, paras. 18 and 19.
[17]A/AC.96/979 of 25 August 2003, para. 66.
[18]A/55/305-S/2000/809 of 21 August 2000, para. 142.
[19]E/4790 of 14 April 1970, "The feasibility of creating an international corps of volunteers for development", paras. 6-7.
[20]The national modality is of recent existence.

into account other expenses,[21] the total cost per UNV comes to US$ 35,400 for international UNVs and US$ 8,400 for national UNVs. UNV management explained the significant increase in the volunteer allowance partly by the decision taken in 1998 to streamline the administration of a number of entitlements (housing, utilities and transportation) that were arranged locally by UNDP, through their monetization, a process which increased the volunteer living allowance by 30-40 per cent, and partly by the annual adjustment made on the basis of an average inflation of 5 per cent per year.

35. UNVs are definitely less costly than United Nations staff. The net annual salary of a United Nations staff member at the P-2 level, step I, without post adjustment and at the single rate, and exclusive of other staff costs was US$ 40,191[22] in 2002. Estimates including post adjustment and rental subsidy to make this figure comparable with the volunteer living allowance will increase it to some US$ 55,000.[23] Other staff costs and gross salary will show an even higher difference.

36. In response to the Inspector's query, UNV management indicated that a comparison with allowances paid by international volunteer-sending agencies had never been made; it could be true, however, that when compared, UNV allowances might be higher, most probably because of the monetization of entitlements. In fact, the consultant engaged to review the conditions of service of UNVs also undertook a review of the volunteer living allowance per country, using the salary of national officers as a basis. The consultant identified certain discrepancies that UNV attempted to correct, but because of the concerns expressed by UNDP field managers, the issue is still under consideration.

37. Another issue in need of clarification is the role and functions of UNVs. The above-mentioned OIOS report states, "There is often a gap or even a contradiction between the responsibilities entrusted to UNVs and the authority delegated to them." In one country in particular OIOS found that about 35 per cent of UNHCR staff were UNVs, employed in a wide range of activities, including core functions of the organization and the administrative and financial management of field offices, although it is understood that volunteers should not normally be entrusted with financial authority and supervisory responsibility.[24] Consequently, OIOS recommended and the Board of Auditors supported[25] that the roles and responsibilities of UNVs employed by UNHCR should be clearly spelled out.

38. Some cooperating organizations were also concerned "... by specific examples of UN volunteers recruited by them not having been allowed to function effectively in their posts or precluded from policy discussions because of their status as volunteers".[26]

39. In response to audit recommendations, UNHCR has drafted guidelines on the use of UNVs that could be useful to UNV and other partner organizations employing a great number of UNVs and facing similar problems. Such guidelines could be agreed upon and annexed to the MOUs currently in process of preparation with a number of UNV partners. The recently concluded MOU with DPKO did not however address the issue of functions and responsibilities of UNVs.

40. The privileges and immunities of UNVs in the performance of their functions is a question of utmost importance, particularly in the prevailing security situation. UNVs are not automatically deemed to be officials within the meaning of articles V and VII of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations or articles VI and VIII of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies. Nonetheless, in specific country agreements some Member States have agreed to grant UNVs

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[21]Non-recurrent costs relating to assignment and repatriation travel, settling-in and resettlement allowance, health and life insurance and medical and security evacuation average US$ 17,400 for international volunteers and US$ 2,600 for national volunteers.
[22]ST/IC/2002/8 of 5 March 2002.
[23]UNV-JIU estimates.
[24]Audit Report 02/025, paras. 11-12.
[25]A/AC.96/978 of 21 August 2003, "Report of the United Nations Board of Auditors on the Financial Statements of the Voluntary Funds administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the year ended 31 December 2002", para. 84.
[26]Taylor, loc. cit., p. 10.

the same status, privileges and immunities as United Nations officials. Under the UNDP Standard Basic Assistance Agreements (SBAAs), UNVs are treated as "persons performing services" and accorded the same treatment as United Nations officials. While UNVs are also considered "persons performing services" under UNICEF Basic Cooperation Agreements (BCAs), they are, however, granted only certain privileges and immunities.

41. In the Inspector's view the issue of the status, privileges and immunities of UNVs working at the United Nations, its funds and programmes and the specialized agencies in each country of assignment should be clearly defined. MOUs in process with UNV partners should clearly delineate the respective responsibilities of UNV/UNDP and the sending agency represented in the country in negotiating with the host Government the granting of privileges and immunities to serving UNVs.

See Recommendation 2

F. Cost-effectiveness of the roster

42. UNVs are primarily recruited from the UNV computerized roster. In 2002, the roster accounted for 80 per cent of the newly recruited UNVs, 13 per cent more than the previous year. Other forms of recruitment are local, in the country of assignment, by the project partners (10 per cent of newly recruited volunteers in 2002); special recruitment campaigns to build up the supply for upcoming demands or hard-to-fill posts through advertisements on the UNV web page, job sites or through partners (8 per cent of new recruits in 2002); and outsourcing, via partners, in cases of mass recruitment for special operations (2 per cent of new recruits in 2002).

43. In 2001, UNV introduced an online application system through which web applications are automatically rostered in the system with minimal manual input. One year later, at the end of 2002, the web accounted for 3 per cent of newly recruited UNVs and, at the end of May 2003, web recruits already represented 7 per cent of total new recruits. With the online application system, UNV has expanded its outreach capacity and has streamlined the processing of applications.

44. The roster has been managed by the Cyprus Processing Centre in Nicosia since 1994 when UNV decided to outsource its volume-intensive data entry for UNV applicants. Nine local personnel are currently working under a service contract with UNV. They respond to enquiries, appraise, log and roster applications for international volunteers, keep the roster up to date and carry out specific corporate activities.

45. National volunteers are not entered into the roster by the Cyprus Processing Centre, but by the Programme Development and Operations Group (PDOG) at Bonn headquarters. It is intended that in the near future, their rostering will be done in the field and with the increase in the proportion of national volunteers, the role of the Centre in Cyprus may decline.

46. The cost-effectiveness of the Centre was questioned by a UNDP/OAPR audit in 1997, after which a consultant was engaged to put forward a number of recommendations in 1998. Recommendations made included the maintenance of the Centre in Cyprus and the reassignment of administrative responsibilities to team members in order to reduce management costs. As a result, operating costs have been reduced from US$ 382,000 in 1997 to an approved budget of US$ 233,000 for 2003.

47. Within the context of the present review, the Inspector once again assessed the cost-effectiveness of the Centre, this time in the light of the impact of the new online application system. Among the issues reviewed were processes and systems in place, the roster composition and ability to cope with existing goals and demands, staffing, workload distribution and time management. The Centre appeared to be a well-run operation with effective controls in place. The Inspector considered, however, that the composition of the roster in terms of gender and countries represented could be improved through a more proactive rather than reactive rostering policy. The staffing of the office may also need to be reviewed taking into account further productivity gains achieved. In addition to the existing indicators on the number of actions processed and the source of selection of candidates, cost and time indicators should be

introduced and closely monitored by the roster manager to better measure and assess the efficiency of operations. UNV commented that building the UNV roster of candidates had always been a balance between active and reactive recruitment methods, the key factor being the anticipated demand for volunteer talents. Once a year, a recruitment planning exercise is done, and further adjusted as needed.

48. The impact of the new online application system could be significant. According to the results of the survey carried out by JIU, web applications are processed four times faster than paper applications. If it is considered that about half of the applications rostered in 2002 were web applications and their rostering represents approximately one quarter of the office workload, the resulting productivity gains are in the order of 9 per cent.

49. Furthermore, although automation has increased the number of total actions dealt with, particularly with the introduction in 2000 of the online questionnaires, processing costs have significantly decreased. In 2002, the cost of processing each application received was estimated at US$ 5 against US$ 53 in 1997.[27]

50. The average cost of each application entered into the roster in 2002 (US$ 67[28] per candidate) can still be decreased through a more intensive use of the online application system. Consequently, rather than offering candidates the online application as an option, UNV should actively encourage it, within the limits imposed by the availability of computer access.

51. From a technical point of view, a team of experts qualified the "UNV system that supports the rostering, identification and administration of UNV volunteers as probably the best comparable human resource management programme developed within the organization to date".[29]

See Recommendation 3

G. Fielding time

52. A major challenge of any field recruitment process is to hire qualified personnel within the shortest possible period, while ensuring speedy deployment in emergency situations. According to a sample of assignments in 2002, 80 per cent of international volunteers involved in development activities were selected/fielded within two months, and the rest within a period of up to seven months. For the categories of humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, etc., 52 per cent were recruited in one month, 34 per cent within two months and 8 per cent between two and four months.

53. The UNV partners interviewed by JIU highlighted as one of the main strengths of the programme, the ability to deploy qualified personnel within a very short period of time. DPKO stated in its response to the JIU questionnaire that, in its experience, the recruitment process could be speeded up if UNV was involved at an early stage of the mission planning and start-up. The UNV experience in rostering and deploying staff could be of much benefit to DPKO in pre-selecting personnel and maintaining them on standby for the start-up phase of a mission.

54. While generally satisfied with the efficiency of the fielding process, the Inspector sees a possibility of further improving it. First, the existing tracking system for fielding volunteers did not provide a trail of delays in the process. These appear to occur notably at the stages of consultation with the recipient Governments and the search for availability of candidates, currently done after acceptance of the candidate. Though the clearance process is beyond the control of UNV, the search for availability of candidates, if carried out by UNV prior to initiating the process or in parallel with the acceptance of the candidate, would save time and resources otherwise lost to no avail. In 2002, the withdrawal rate of

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[27] 2002 expenditures = US$ 192,370: 35,586 (5,786 PHS logged + 29,800 online questionnaires received) = US$ 5.40; 1997 expenditures = US$ 382,000: 7,152 PHS logged = US$ 53.

[28] 2002 expenditures = US$ 192,370: 2,892 (1,940 manual applications + 952 web applications rostered) = US$ 66.5.

[29] DP/2002/18 of 8 April 2002, para. 59.

candidates was 7 per cent owing to non-response or negative response to the search for confirmation of availability. UNV officials explained that searching the availability of candidates at an early stage might raise undue expectations and disappointment in case of non-acceptance by the recipient Government. In the Inspector's opinion, it should be possible to deal with this issue through clear communication with the candidates.

H. Diversity of modalities and conditions of service

55. In 2002, there were 63.4 per cent international specialists, 22.9 per cent national specialists, 10.5 per cent national field workers, 2.4 per cent UNISTAR,[30] 0.5 per cent international field worker and 0.3 per cent TOKTEN.[31] Within the category of associates, from 1999 more than 3,000 online volunteers have carried out assignments through the UNV/NetAid online volunteering programme under no contract arrangement with UNV.

56. Conditions of service have been established for international UNV specialists (May 1999), national UNVs (March 1998) and UNV field workers (1993) but not for the TOKTEN or UNISTAR modalities. A review of the relevant documents did not shed much light on the difference between the various modalities. Recognizing that the diversity of modalities and conditions of service was a source of confusion and inconsistency at the field level and could even result in inequalities of treatment, in 2003 UNV adopted a new model called "the cube" whereby the existing modalities are classified depending on: (a) the experience and type of association with UNV (specialists, interns or associates); (b) the origin and/or destination (international, national); and (c) the association with a particular programme, concept or initiative (general programme, community exchange programme, corporate/private-sector programme, the United Nations Information Technology Service (UNITeS)[32] or TOKTEN).

57. Flowing from this simplified categorization, a harmonization of entitlements will follow even though some differences will remain to reflect the different conditions of service and qualifications of serving volunteers. In the Inspector's view, the revision and harmonization of conditions of service and entitlements for the different modalities of volunteers should be part of the broader assessment of the basic concept and cost of volunteers proposed earlier in this report.

I. Management and backstopping of volunteers

58. The management of the UNV programme in the field and backstopping of serving volunteers are essentially provided, in the case of peacekeeping missions, by the UNV Support Unit or the administrative unit of the mission, under the terms of the relevant MOU or by the UNDP-based country office team.

59. The UNV Support Unit of the specific mission includes one or two international volunteers funded by the mission and eventually one programme manager recruited under appointment of limited duration (ALD) contracts to coordinate specific programmes. In 2002, UNV had programme managers in five United Nations missions.

60. The country office team is composed of one or two international volunteers functioning as programme officers, and a country operations assistant. As at September 2002, UNV had 75 programme officers covering 79 countries. These were funded from UNDP/UNV resources or fully financed by donors. The criterion was to designate a programme officer for every 20 volunteers. The actual ratio was 1/31 and the number of volunteers per programme officer ranged between 4 and as many as 69.

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[30]UNISTAR: corporate volunteers on short-term advisory missions to a country under an agreement signed by UNV with the company.

[31]TOKTEN: expatriates with permanent residence or citizenship in another country, serving in their country of origin.

[32]UNITeS is a volunteer initiative to help bridge the North-South digital divide, established by UNV at the request of the Secretary-General.

61. At the time of completion of this report, the Inspector was informed that the above criterion had been revised. Under the new concept, programme officers are now assigned based not only on the number of serving volunteers, but also on the number of "pipeline" volunteers, the least developed country status, the country potential and strategic importance, the projects in execution, the "V" index (United Nations resolutions, IYV visibility, etc.) and the supportive environment. As at October 2003, the ratio of programme officer/volunteers actually increased. There were 81 programme officers in 73 countries, plus seven under recruitment; the ratio being 1/23 and the number of volunteers ranging from 3 to 60 volunteers per programme officer. In fact, the new concept will be applied as and when the need to hire a new programme officer arises, either to create a new position or replace the existing one.

62. The functions of the programme officer and programme manager are basically the same, differing only in the scope of activities and funding source. Their performance is assessed within the regular performance appraisal system for UNV staff. Where no designated programme officer or manager exists, in 40 per cent of the countries of assignment in 2002,[33] a UNV focal point is designated at the relevant UNDP country office to represent UNV and deal with the administration of volunteers. No terms of reference for the UNV focal point responsibility have been developed in writing and it is unclear how the effectiveness of this function is measured and what is the actual support provided to the 10 per cent of volunteers serving in development activities without a country office team presence.

63. The Inspector questioned the rationale of maintaining programme officers in locations where a reduced number of volunteers is serving and suggested that the need for maintaining a UNV field presence should be assessed against the possibility of resorting to the UNDP-based focal point, assuming this responsibility functions effectively. In financial terms, it could represent some savings, taking into account that, regardless of whether or not focal point services are provided and the quality of such services, UNDP country offices charged a flat rate of support costs of 2.5 per cent in respect of all UNDP-funded and non-UNDP-funded volunteers. It is nevertheless understood that there are other than economic considerations, such as the comparative advantage in the quality of services provided by a full-time officer who, in addition, is a volunteer and therefore has better knowledge of the programme and can be a better advocate of UNV interests.

64. Realizing the importance of programme officers as front-line managers, UNV, in addition to reviewing the programme officer scheme as outlined above, in June 2003 introduced a capacity-development programme aimed at enhancing the competence of country office teams for the effective discharging of their duties and responsibilities through learning, training and mentoring. It has developed guidelines for building up a roster of qualified candidates and for the recruitment of programme officers.

65. The Inspector has noted as an improvement the introduction in April 2003 of the new volunteer periodic reporting system, whereby feedback from the volunteers may be obtained on support and assistance received during their specific assignments.

J. Training of volunteers

66. One of the functions of the programme officer and programme manager is to brief/train volunteers on the assignment upon arrival in the country. There is no formalized training for volunteers, the pro-forma costs of UNVs including only a small amount for training in local languages. The lack of training is a recurrent issue in UNV evaluations. Training becomes crucial in cases where UNVs work in isolation without direct supervision of UNV programme officers or United Nations staff.

67. In an attempt to address this concern and better support UNV programme officers at the country level, the Report of the Administrator for 2000-2001[34] announced that UNV had established a "comprehensive country briefing kit to serve as a guide for newly arrived UNV volunteers". One and a half years later, the production of the briefing kit has not been completed. The kit was almost ready for

[33]Programme officers in 79 country offices + programme managers in 5 peacekeeping missions = 84 out of 139 countries of assignment.
[34]DP/2002/18, para. 65.

reproduction when it was decided to change the layout to make it shorter and more user-friendly. Even so, these types of briefing materials are by nature too general to provide an understanding of the specific assignment. Therefore, it is important to complement general information with orientation/training sessions in the field covering aspects such as the situation in the country, the United Nations presence and the mandates of different organizations, the specific volunteer assignment, and administrative/security procedures, as well as on-the-job training.

68. A review of the job descriptions/terms of reference of the programme officers and managers revealed that the task of organizing comprehensive briefing/orientation for newly arrived volunteers was listed among the responsibilities and duties only of those programme managers and support officers attached to peacekeeping missions. In response to the JIU questionnaire, DPKO confirmed that UNVs were not included in the training plans of the Civilian Training Section/Personnel Management and Support Service/OMS, either at headquarters or in the mission; but they did participate in the induction training for new staff. UNV is indeed taking action to enforce the training of volunteers. A requirement for briefing/training UNVs assigned to United Nations missions has been included in the MOU recently signed with DPKO.

69. In the country offices, such responsibility has been assigned to the programme officers. Still, actual implementation has to be enforced. Compliance would be verified through the recently developed volunteers reporting system where there is a chapter specifically dedicated to this issue. Building up the capacity of the programme officers to become trainers of trainees is the first step. Six regional workshops in the field were foreseen for the end of 2003 and in 2004, and subsequently every two years, in order to ensure continuous learning of programme officers.

See Recommendation 4

IV. PARTNERSHIPS

70. Goal 3 of the UNV Business Plan is to build UNV into a highly networked programme which draws strengths from strategic relationships and partnerships at global, regional, and country level.

71. UNV has indeed succeeded in establishing an extensive network of partners and is progressively building up for global outreach, diversification and increased effectiveness. Traditionally, UNV has worked in partnership with Governments, United Nations agencies and NGOs. Although the United Nations, its funds and programmes, is by far the main UNV partner, in recent years UNV has been exploring new partnerships with the European Union and non-traditional partners, involving transnational corporations and national private companies in volunteer development activities. Agreements have been concluded or are ongoing with a number of such entities. Some of these are recent (e.g. the private sector and NGOs), others are old and in need of revamping (agreements with cooperating agencies) while others have been considerably delayed (United Nations partners) or are making slow progress (European Union). The Inspector sees these agreements as a tool to strengthen this network of partners and to ensure that a common framework of rules and procedures governs all UNV engagements in a consistent manner.

72. It was noted that as a result of the IYV, partnerships were strengthened with domestic volunteer agencies and organizations such as the International Association for Voluntary Effort (IAVE), the World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Business Leader Forum (IBLF) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

A. United Nations partners

73. In 2002, two main UNV partners, UNDP/Governments and the United Nations (mainly DPKO), accounted for 48 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively, of total UNV assignments. Other important partners were UNHCR with 9 per cent of total UNV assignments, and the World Food Programme (WFP)

with 3 per cent and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) with 2 per cent.

74. The number of United Nations partners has decreased over the years, and the share of assignments among organizations has changed. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), which were significant partners during the 1980s, are no longer so. In 2002, FAO employed only 20 UNVs and ILO seven. This decline in the use of UNVs was explained as a result of the overall reduction of field project activities and UNDP-funded projects with the switch to government execution. UNV management acknowledged the need for more interaction with United Nations partners, and is committed to do better, not only with FAO and ILO, with whom the cooperation has declined in recent years, but also with UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO).

75. MOUs have been signed or are in preparation with a few of these partners. For each DPKO mission where UNVs have served, agreements have been signed covering implementation, financial arrangements and conditions of service of volunteers. A global MOU, due for completion for over three years, was finally concluded in November 2003.[35] Another MOU was signed with UNHCR, though limited to the deployment of volunteers to emergency/repatriation operations. The OIOS report on UNHCR use of UNVs referred to above, has recommended that a new MOU should be entered into to define a legal framework and procedures covering all categories of UNVs. At the time of this report, the agreement was in preparation. Two others, with UNFPA and WFP, were in their very initial stages. During the previous decade, other agreements had been entered into for very specific purposes with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

76. It is important to develop clear policies, standards and arrangements for the involvement of UNVs in activities with United Nations partners. Consequently, the completion of MOUs, the ideal instruments for addressing these issues, should not be delayed further. UNV should also establish a network of focal points in the United Nations system and keep contact with them for developing guidance on the management and administration of UNVs and for disseminating information.

B. Cooperating organizations

77. In 2002 UNV had a network of 49 cooperating agencies and national focal points in developed and developing countries that provided support in mobilizing volunteers and resources for the general UNV roster and special recruitment activities, at no cost to UNV. These cooperating agencies could be an NGO or a department of a government ministry, and are important for UNV in promoting collaboration with the respective donor Governments as well.

78. UNV has signed agreements with most of these agencies, defining the scope of responsibility of each party. However, some of the agreements are out of date and need revamping, as a means to avoid misunderstandings on the role of UNVs. These have become apparent from various evaluations conducted by external consultants. Since this area has been extensively evaluated and has been the subject of numerous recommendations, the Inspector is limiting his intervention at this stage to recommending the updating of existing agreements with the main cooperating agencies.

See Recommendation 5

[35] In 2000, DPKO and UNV were already in discussions for the conclusion of a global MOU. (A/55/305, S/2000/809), para. 142.

V. GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND STRUCTURE

79. The governance of UNV, as a programme of UNDP, derives from the UNDP Executive Board and UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules. Every two years, the UNDP Executive Board considers the Report of the Administrator on UNV, which is presented by the UNV Executive Coordinator. A review of the relevant Executive Board discussions and decisions from 1998 to date revealed widespread support for UNV activities but more limited guidance in programmatic or financial issues. This is due, on the one hand, to the fact that the UNV programme planning, evaluation and reporting system is embedded in the UNDP system and, on the other, that the Report of the Administrator does not go to the level of detail which would prompt a substantive discussion of programme and management issues.

80. Other than this biennial reporting to the UNDP Executive Board, UNV used to organize intergovernmental meetings every five years, but they had only consultative status and were discontinued for reasons of cost effectiveness after the last meeting in 1997.

81. Day-to-day management is entrusted to the Executive Coordinator, appointed by the UNDP Administrator, who is also Administrator of UNV under the terms of the pertinent General Assembly resolution.[36] The Executive Coordinator, whose post is graded at the D-2 level, is to promote and coordinate the recruitment, selection, training and administrative management of the activities of UNV. The Executive Coordinator has full authority for programme and administrative purposes and delegated certifying and approving functions for authorizing and reporting expenditures, which includes the maintenance of separate accounts and records and the preparation of financial statements. The only exceptions to this delegation are for the signature of trust fund agreements, procurement over US$ 300,000, and recruitment/promotion of international staff under the 100/200 series of the Staff Regulations and Rules.

82. A Deputy Executive Coordinator assists the Executive Coordinator. In recent years, the division of responsibilities among them, in practice, was such that the Executive Coordinator dealt mainly with external issues and the Deputy focused more on internal administration. Although this work distribution functioned well, it was not formalized in writing. The Inspector believes that whatever division of responsibilities are agreed to in the future, they should be stated in writing and made known to all parties concerned.

83. Despite the programme attachment to UNDP, the UNV Executive Coordinator did not participate in the UNDP strategic management meetings held every two weeks. Since November 2002, however, the Executive Coordinator and her Deputy had started attending through videoconference the weekly UNDP executive team meetings. This is, in the Inspector's view, a first step towards a more active UNV/UNDP corporate management that should be pursued, in addition to the visits that senior officials make to the respective headquarters.

84. Senior management consultations at UNV are conducted through the CMT and the SSM. The CMT was instituted in October 2002 as a restricted senior group of six managers, basically at the D-1 level and above,[37] intended to be a support to existing mechanisms of strategic decision-making and to hold monthly meetings. The SSM are also to be held every month with the participation of all chiefs of groups, sections and units and serve as an information sharing and consultative group as well as an important sounding board on substantive and operational issues. Every quarter, the SSM should review the implementation of the UNV Business Plan.

85. Summaries of the meetings are prepared and communicated to the staff at large. A review of the summaries suggests the need for improving their frequency and effectiveness through regular gatherings,

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[36]Resolution 2659 (XXV).

[37]Participants in the CMT are, in addition to the Executive Coordinator and the Deputy, the Chief of the Programme Development and Operations Group, the Chief of the Support Services Group, the Chief of the External Relations Group and the Chief of the Representational Office in North America (RONA) in New York, through teleconference.

a more focused agenda on the implementation of the Business Plan, and regular follow-up and feedback on actions taken. Actually, only five SSM and three CMT meetings were held in 2002 and four SSM and six CMT meetings in 2003.

86. The SSM and the CMT only have recommending powers, since decisions are ultimately taken by top management and communicated to the staff by e-mail. UNV has no formalized system of issuing, disseminating and filing administrative decisions. The Inspector has been informed that, as a result of consultations held in the process of the preparation of the present report, such a system will now be introduced.

87. A one-day staff retreat is organized every year in February, followed by a three-day senior management retreat. The first one discusses mainly management and personnel issues with the participation of the Staff Association while the second focuses on policy and strategy issues. In addition to informal contacts with staff representatives, formal meetings with the Staff Association are held twice a year. It is well recognized that the late Executive Coordinator had endowed the programme with a dynamic and participatory style of management.

88. The current UNV structure was put in place in July 2000, in connection with the need to integrate services more effectively, fine-tune processes and stimulate synergies amongst various units. Prior to this, a workflow analysis carried out in 1997, following the move from Geneva to Bonn, had led to a radical rearrangement of processes and functions but not to structural changes.

89. The structure adopted in 2000 has remained basically the same, with a realignment of functions within the Support Services Group (SSG) in 2001 to strengthen the human resources function and recently, in 2003, to move the functions of the General Service unit to the Office of the Chief of SSG. The only significant structural change was introduced in July 2002 with the transfer to Bonn of part of the Geneva-based Humanitarian Relief Unit. A small representation presence has been maintained at Geneva.

90. According to the UNV organizational chart (see annex), the programme is presently structured in three main groups or services. The functions of the different groups are published on the UNV Intranet. In addition to the headquarters office in Bonn, UNV has RONA and two liaison offices in Geneva and Japan, the Cyprus Processing Centre and 73 UNDP-based country office teams. The liaison office in Brussels was closed down in 2003. The reasons put forward for maintaining liaison offices were the important presence of international organizations and missions and the funding provided by a major donor.[38]

91. Seven heads of sections/groups have direct reporting lines to the Office of the Executive Coordinator (OEC). The structure and reporting arrangements at other levels appear to be in some instances based more on individual profiles and skills than on managerial or organizational logic. UNV management has acknowledged the need for a more linear structure. In so doing, differentiated reporting lines could be established to the Executive Coordinator and the Deputy and units merged.

See Recommendation 6

VI. STAFF RESOURCES

92. The alignment of staff resources with evolving organizational needs is a challenge for any organization. For an operational programme like UNV, the size of the field programme determined by the number of serving volunteers has a direct impact on the support capacity required at headquarters, except for a minimum core organizational capacity which is necessary irrespective of the number of volunteers.

[38]The RONA office is staffed by four personnel and headed by a D-1; the Geneva and Japan liaison offices have two staff each and are headed at a level equivalent to P-3. Their respective cost in 2002 was some US$ 0.5 million for New York and Geneva, and US$ 150,000 for Japan, this latest being fully funded by the Government.

With this in mind, the UNDP Governing Council approved in 1988[39] a staffing formula to supplement the UNV core budget by an additional annual charge to UNDP that related the number of posts to the number of additional serving volunteers. However, the UNDP Executive Board first revised[40] the staffing formula in 1997 to achieve economies of scale, and later, in 1999,[41] discontinued the application of this formula, owing to financial constraints. As a result, in the last 10 years, as may be seen from the table below, despite the sustained increase in the number of UNVs of 64 per cent, there has been no increase in the number of posts funded at UNV headquarters from the UNDP biennial support budget. On the contrary, the number of posts financed from this budget decreased by 6 per cent, while the ratio UNVs/posts went up from 31 to 53. Although the number of posts financed from other resources in fact doubled from 1994/1995 to 2002/2003, such an increase could not compensate for the decrease of 20 per cent in regular posts funded from UNDP voluntary contributions.[42]

Table 3. Posts funded from the UNDP biennial support budget

	1994-1995		1996-1997		1998-1999		2000-2001		2002-2003	
	P*	GS**	P	GS	P	GS	P	GS	P	GS
Regular resources	33	60	29	56	27	50	27	47	27	47
Other resources	8	5	11	5	8	12	10	15	11	15
Sub total (all resources)	41	65	40	61	35	62	37	62	38	62
Total (P + GS)	106		101		97		99		100	
Number of UNVs	3,263		3,620		4,383		5,090		5,300	
Ratio UNVs/posts	31		36		45		51		53	

* P : Professional.

** GS : General Service.

93. To compensate for the staffing cuts and to meet the incremental programme-support needs of the office, UNV has resorted to other staffing modalities, so that the actual number of posts/positions at the end of 2002 was 169, i.e. 69 positions in addition to the approved number of posts in the 2002-2003 UNDP budget.

94. Further, in the field, 60 programme officers and 60 programme assistants posts were funded under the UNDP regular resources biennial support budget,[43] their number having remained stable since 1990 when the Governing Council increased them from 40 to 60.[44] Some additional posts were financed under full-funding arrangements with donors, for a total of 75 programme officers and 74 country-office assistants in the field. Taking them into account, total UNV posts/positions funded in 2002 under different arrangements at headquarters and in the field were 318.

95. In contrast with the need to create posts/positions outside staffing table control, the number of vacant posts (17 posts vacant and 3 frozen) was quite high, resulting in a vacancy rate of 12 per cent overall, with 9 per cent in respect of professional posts. When commenting on the effects of depriving the programme of this workforce, management explained that some of these vacant posts are related to functions that are not needed, while the frozen posts have been used to finance posts at a higher position. If this were so, the Inspector would recommend that the relevant posts should be reclassified or abolished.

96. UNV human resources have been guided by UNDP policies that focused more on personnel administration rather than on strategic resources management, until 2003 when UNDP published a strategic framework. UNV needs to develop and implement its own strategy tailored to its particular conditions and encompassing all aspects of human resources management. At the time of this review, such a strategy was in the process of being prepared.

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[39]DP/88/46, para. 11.

[40]Executive Board decision 97/24, para. 4, and DP/1997/23, paras. 103-114.

[41]Executive Board decision 99/23 and DP/1999/31. para. 92.

[42]DP/2001/21 of 29 June 2001, UNDP budget estimates for the biennium 2002-2003, paras. 94-100.

[43]Ibid., p. 60 and DP/1997/23, para. 114.

[44]DP/90/45, para. 20.

97. An essential requirement for implementing any human resources strategy is to provide it with effective leadership. In this connection, it is noted that the P-4 post of head of human resources has been occupied since April 2002 by a person on an ALD who, in addition, is leaving at the end of her contract, early next year. The reason given for using this type of contract for such an important position was the flexibility that it offered to hire on an urgent basis a replacement for the incumbent of the post, as opposed to the normal lengthy recruitment procedures. The Inspector expects that this time the post will be advertised and a person selected as early as possible to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities.

98. Another important step to ensure adequate human resources management and reporting is the implementation of a human resource database. As part of UNDP, UNV has introduced and further discontinued two human resource databases in recent years, while the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), only registered UNV professional staff administered by UNDP. Consequently, for many years, UNV has kept basic information in spreadsheets and hard copies, making it difficult to produce any reliable human resources management report. At the end of 2002, it was decided to introduce, as an interim measure, a database used by DPKO. At the time of finalization of this report, the Unit had embarked on intensive data entry for the implementation of the human resources module of the new ERP software by 1 January 2004. It is expected that ERP will hopefully resolve the problem of lack of a reliable database for the management of human resources.

99. According to the figures provided, the geographical representation of the staff at UNV needs improvement. The 63 professionals in the staffing table[45] represent 38 different nationalities. By region, professional staff were predominantly from Western Europe and North America (54 per cent), followed by Africa (22 per cent), Asia and the Pacific (14 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (8 per cent) and Eastern Europe (2 per cent). There is an evident imbalance in respect of a group of countries.

100. The proportion of professional women was 38 per cent in 2002 (36 per cent of women in senior positions, i.e. P-5 and above). The following table indicates that in 2000 UNV ranked among the highest in percentage of women in professional posts in the United Nations and its funds and programmes. However, no progress was achieved in 2001 and 2002. UNV should pursue efforts to reach the UN target of 50 per cent women.

Table 4. Representation of professional women in the United Nations and its funds and programmes in 2000

	UNV	United Nations	UNDP	UNFPA	UNOPS	UNHCR	UNICEF	WFP
Women	39 %	35 %	40 %	50 %	23 %	39 %	41 %	33 %

101. About 50 per cent of the posts filled were funded from regular resources. Like many other organizations, UNV has become more and more dependent on extrabudgetary resources to meet its staffing needs. By type of contract, the contracting pattern revealed a widespread use of ALDs. With 24 per cent of total staff, ALDs came second in ranking by type of contract after fixed-term contracts (58 per cent), while permanent contracts accounted for 8 per cent of the total, JPOs for 3 per cent and other short-term contracts for 1 per cent.

102. The ALD modality under the 300 series of the Staff Rules was introduced at UNDP on a pilot basis in 1994 and administered centrally. From 1998, UNV was authorized to hire locally recruited support staff and from November 2000, delegation of authority was extended to the recruitment of local professional and international ALDs. ALD was intended to be a flexible hiring tool for appointments of between six months and three years, with the possibility of extension of up to four years in exceptional cases, and to reduce the administrative workload, overhead and staff costs through restricted entitlements and benefits. Their limited duration is the distinctive element as compared to other types of appointment, since they should not create expectancy of continued, long-term employment. Holders of this type of

[45] Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) excluded.

contract are to perform quite specialized functions and time-bound activities, or are internationally hired personnel on projects.[46]

103. Although most ALDs were performing such functions at UNV, some were placed in core functions whose limited duration or time-bound nature could be questionable, or were even hired against vacant established posts. This was the case, for instance, of the Head of Communications of the External Relations Group, the liaison officer positions, the head of human resources, the network manager of the Information Support Unit and an evaluation and management support specialist at the Evaluation Unit.

104. When the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) discussed the issue of ALDs in 1997, some concern was "expressed as to whether appointments of limited duration might replace those of current contractual arrangements over time and thus impinge on the 'core' workforce.[47] The Inspector shares this concern, in view of the fact that one quarter of the workforce at UNV in 2002 was hired under this arrangement, outside staffing table control, and some incumbents were regularized after four years of service. Although conscious of the need to refresh the organization with new talent, the Inspector sees a risk in that ALDs can be used to short-cut normal recruitment and promotion procedures. Hence, their proliferation should be contained, notwithstanding their benefits in terms of "flexibility and swiftness in recruitment in times of limited resources"[48] and the need to resort to them for specific purposes.

105. Another employment modality used by UNV for the nine staff of the Cyprus Processing Centre is the "service contract". This contractual arrangement was introduced by UNDP in 1997 for personnel not covered by Staff Rules, and exceeding the acceptable duration of a special service agreement (SSA). "It is a flexible and generic contracting mechanism, to be adapted to the particular context of each country",[49] intended to hire local personnel on projects, or for activities that would normally be outsourced and, consequently, outside staffing table control.

106. A review of post structure and incumbency revealed a predominance of posts at intermediate and high-level positions, numerous L posts at headquarters, and staff positioned at a level higher than their post. In principle, L posts under the 200 series of the Staff Rules are reserved for technical cooperation project personnel. Appointments to L posts are not necessarily subject to competitive recruitment. Although this type of personnel is non-rotational and has contracts "limited to UNV", the fact that almost one fifth of the UNV staff (18) in Bonn are under project contract is a matter of concern, given that many of them were performing functions such as Management Officer in OEC, Management Support Specialist in the Office of the Chief, PDOG, Chief Research Development Unit, Head of the e-Volunteering Unit, Administrative Officer, Administrative Analyst, etc.

107. In the light of the above, the Inspector is of the opinion that the UNV Biennial Report of the Administrator to the UNDP Executive Board should regularly include a chapter on UNV human resources management and provide statistical comparative data on the number of posts, funding sources and contracting arrangements, the geographical distribution of professional staff and the gender balance.

108. The Inspector has noted considerable progress in the area of staff development since a learning team was created in 2000. A learning model was devised through extensive interviewing and the organization of meetings and workshops. The learning model implemented in 2003 combines informal and formal in-house learning with external training and support for learning. In-house formal learning programmes include group training in: facilitation skills, communication and conflict resolution, performance management, supervisory skills, negotiation skills, languages, and computer skills (among others the International Computer Driver's Licence programme and ERP). External specialized training was approved and financed for about 20 staff. The Inspector commends these efforts and encourages their sustainability.

See Recommendations 7 and 8

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[46]ALD users' handbook, November 2000.
[47]A/52/30, "Report of the International Civil Service Commission for the year 1997", para. 237.
[48]Ibid., para. 236.
[49]UNDP/ADM/97/70.

VII. PROGRAMME AND FINANCIAL PLANNING

A. Programme planning

109. UNV programme activities in principle follow the goals, and strategic areas of support in the UNDP SRF, which is the primary planning instrument for UNDP country, regional and global programmes. SRF establishes six categories of goals: an enabling environment for sustainable human development (SHD), poverty eradication, environment, gender, special development situations, and support to the United Nations.

110. The most recent UNV long-term planning document was Strategy 2000, which covers the period 1997-2000. It built on the previous UNV Strategy for 1993-1996 and encompassed the elements of SRF but these were framed in a different way. After Strategy 2000, however, no other strategic document has been devised.

111. Currently, UNV planning has three levels: an overall framework based on the mission statement and seven key planning goals (four concerning programme/policy issues, three related to management and administration) that provide general guidance and direction without specifying deliverables and time-frames; a three-year rolling Business Plan in which the seven goals are translated into concrete actions; and yearly plans for each group, section and unit. The unit plans in turn form the basis for the preparation of individual performance plans. Guidelines for the preparation of plans, providing guidance and deadlines for completion were unavailable.

112. UNV explained that a different planning cycle had been adopted for practical purposes in order to avoid the end of the year rush when so many reports are due. Updates to the three-year rolling plan are made following the senior staff retreat organized in February of each year. The Inspector noted that the SSM of mid-April 2003 agreed that the Business Plan for 2003-2005 would be finalized within one week. However, neither the CMT meeting held one week later nor any subsequent meeting took any decision to adopt it. As a result, as of May 2003, the unit plans for the year were still in draft form.

113. UNV management does not see as a disadvantage the fact that the planning cycle does not coincide with the budget cycle since it is a rolling plan and objectives do not vary essentially from one year to the next. Only deadlines are adjusted accordingly. In principle, the Inspector sees no objection to this approach, as long as the finalization of annual plans does not go over the first quarter of the year, as is the case at present.

114. The UNV Business Plan for 2003-2005 contains objectives, deliverables and activities by goal, but no indicators or time-frame/deadlines for completion of activities. Apparently these are incorporated at the level of the unit plans, but there was only one case in which this was effectively done in 2003. The 2003 plan foresees as many as 179 activities for execution. So many activities cannot be implemented without assigning a degree of priority to each of them, designating a responsible official and agreeing on a timetable for execution. It is noted that the CMT meeting of January 2003 identified 17 priority issues to be addressed during 2003 of which all but two were implemented. Without indicators, successful performance cannot be adequately monitored and measured; consequently, the risk of implementation being delayed and delivery compromised is high.

115. UNV is not applying RBB, though it is expected to be introduced in the context of the ongoing ERP exercise (wave 2). At the time of the last interviews, however, UNV managers had no clear understanding about how much corporate planning and budgeting could be done through ERP. In the meantime, planning and reporting are carried out in tandem with UNDP in the Multi-year Funding Framework (MYFF), SFR and the results-oriented annual report (ROAR).

See Recommendation 9

B. Financial planning

116. Financial planning is a separate exercise at UNV. There is no link between the Business Plan and the biennial budget cycle and no correlation between objectives, resources and outcomes. It is therefore unclear how resources are assigned to meet programme objectives.

117. Neither is there a detailed UNV budget. The totality of UNV resources needed/used for both programme and support activities during the past and current biennium is disclosed in a table entitled "UNV resource planning table - projected resource availability and utilization of resources" presented in an annex to the Biennial Report of the Administrator to the UNDP Executive Board. This is a disclosure of income and expenditures in which resources available and used are classified by funding sources in two categories: regular resources from the SVF and other resources.

118. The UNDP Executive Board does not approve, take note or make any reference to this resource planning table in its decision concerning the Report of the Administrator. The only Executive Board decision related to the UNV financial framework is taken in connection with the approval of the UNDP budget estimates for the biennium in support of operational activities of the United Nations. This is the so-called UNV biennial support budget. This budget is part of other UNV resources and accounted for only 15 per cent of total UNV funding in 2002.

119. The information in the UNV planning table is not detailed enough to provide a transparent overview and permit appropriate legislative guidance. For instance, no disclosure is made of:

- The financial value of volunteer assignments that are charged directly to agencies and partners, which are not cash contributions, and represent about 70 per cent of other resources in 2000-2001;
- The allocation of resources between headquarters and the field;
- The breakdown of resources by programme area;
- Support costs;
- Income from services rendered; and
- Posts to be financed from regular and other resources.

See Recommendation 10

C. Funding arrangements

120. Income and expenditures at UNV have steadily increased over the years, as disclosed in the table below. Overall, this growth exceeds the increase in the number of UNVs. In fact, UNV has enjoyed a relatively "healthy" financial situation.

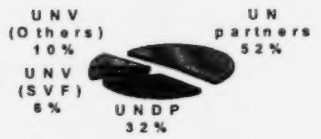
Table 5. Overview of the increase in UNV resources and number of UNVs
(Millions of US dollars)

	1996-1997	1998-1999	2000-2001	2002-2003	2003/1996
Opening balance plus income	172.6	202.2	275.2	280.3	+63 %
Use of resources	122.5	150.8	210.3	206.5	+69 %
Closing balance	50.1	51.4	64.8	73.8	+46 %
Commitments	28.4	30.7	46.5	61.3	+117 %
Balance of uncommitted resources	21.7	20.7	18.3	12.5	-43 %
Number of UNVs	3,620	4,383	5,090	5,300	+46 %

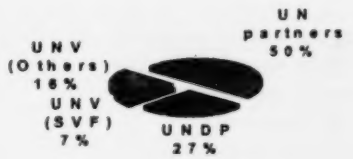
121. Three issues, however, may entail an inherent financial risk, together with the unpredictability of extrabudgetary funding: the balance of uncommitted resources has decreased in recent years and no operational reserve is maintained. Given the nature of UNV funding, the level of risk is low, and UNV could mitigate it by creating an operational reserve.

122. UNV has not devised a funding strategy. Yet, it has secured funding for its operations through different funding arrangements. Part of UNV resources comes from UNDP; other significant sources are the United Nations, its funds and programmes and specialized agencies, as well as contributions from Governments, including the SVF.

123. The graph below shows that the United Nations partners, other than UNDP, are the main UNV funding source with 50 per cent in 2002. These, however, are not cash contributions; but the financial value of volunteer assignments that are charged directly to DPKO (73 per cent) and other United Nations funds and programmes, such as UNHCR, WFP, etc.



2000-2001: 210.3 million



2002: 106.8 million

124. Second in importance is UNDP with 27 per cent of the funding in 2002, of which 15 per cent is the UNDP contribution to the biennial support budget and 12 per cent the value of volunteer assignments under UNDP-financed projects and programmes.

125. With only 12 per cent of the total funding, UNDP finances about 48 per cent of total UNV assignments, whereas the United Nations partners provided 50 per cent of the funding for 49 per cent of the assignments. This was explained as being because UNDP employed more national UNVs, who are less costly, as opposed to DPKO that mainly or exclusively employs international volunteers.

126. Secure funding is provided for about 80 per cent of total UNV expenditures, in the form of appropriations from the UNDP budget and reimbursement for services to third parties directly charged. This fact grants a certain stability to UNV operations.

127. Cash contributions, which are less predictable and not always received in a timely fashion, represented about 20 per cent of the expenditures. Other resources under trust funds, full funding and cost-sharing arrangements accounted for 16 per cent of the funding in 2002. Since UNV has no delegated authority for the management of trust funds, the other two funding arrangements have been favoured in recent years, in particular full funding. Contributions to SVF funded 7 per cent of the expenditures in 2002. The trend is to increase these cash contributions. Although their share is still modest, they are expected to exceed the UNDP contribution to the biennial support budget in 2002-2003. They have, however, different purposes and are therefore complementary.

The biennial support budget

128. The Inspector noted that the biennial support budget share over total UNV resources has decreased from 26 per cent of total contributions in 1996-1997 to 16 per cent in 2002-2003. In particular, the component financed from voluntary contributions to UNDP has decreased by 25 per cent, as shown in the table below.

129. Conversely, the "other resources" part of the biennial support budget has progressively increased in line with the growth of the UNV programme in recent years in non-UNDP financed activities, such as United Nations peacekeeping activities. This increase could not compensate for the decline in UNDP funding, and overall the budget was reduced by 5 per cent.

130. Since this budget serves to cover a basic management structure for the UNV programme as a whole and to provide operational support to the fielding of volunteers, a 5 per cent reduction has a direct impact on the operations.

Table 6. The biennial support budget
(Millions of US dollars)[50]

Biennial support budget	**1996-1997**	**1998-1999**	**2000-2001**	**2002-2003**	**(Percentage) 2003/1996**
Regular resources (gross)	32.8	30.4	29.2	28.7	-12.5
Regular resources income	0.0	1.0	2.0	4.2	+400
Regular resources (net)	32.8	29.4	27.2	4.5	-25
Other resources	3.1	2.3	5.5	5.7	+84
Total resources (gross)	35.9	32.7	34.7	34.4	-4
Total resources (net)	35.9	31.7	32.7	30.2	**-5**

131. Expenditures from the budget totalled US$ 32.6 million in the last biennium, mainly for posts and other staff costs (about 60 per cent), consultants/ALDs and operating expenses.

The Special Voluntary Fund

132. SVF goes back to the establishment of UNV in 1970, when General Assembly resolution 2659 (XXV) called for its establishment "for the support of activities of the United Nations Volunteers".[51] In the terms of Governing Council decision 88/38,[52] the Fund was to provide resources, inter alia, to fund pilot and experimental projects. Under the terms of its decision 98/13, the Executive Board decided that "it is appropriate to finance from the Special Voluntary Fund strategic and cross-cutting thematic evaluations and to supplement the monitoring of United Nations Volunteers and projects executed by the United Nations Volunteers programme".[53]

133. The Inspector has had difficulties in analysing SVF data related to the strategic use of the relevant resources, the rationale for the level of expenditure and the incurring of commitments, as well as the level of uncommitted resources. It is noted that an independent review of SVF carried out in 2000 highlighted the need to focus the use of resources better, and more strategically. In order to convince donors of the need to reach the target contributions of US$ 10 million to the Fund as requested in the Report of the Administrator and to enable the Executive Board to take informed decisions, it might be desirable to improve the presentation of the use of the Fund and to provide, in future reports, a breakdown of programme expenditures.

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[50] DP/2001/21 of 29 June 2001, Table 9, p. 40.
[51] Paragraph 4.
[52] Decision of 1 July 1988, sect. B, para. 4.
[53] Decision of 19 June 1998, para. 8.

Main contributors

134. In 2000-2001, UNV received cash contributions from individual donor countries to an amount of US$ 34.9 million, of which 20 per cent were contributions to the SVF and 80 per cent to other resources (trust funds, full funding and cost-sharing). The 2000-2001 contributions increased by 12 per cent, as compared to the previous biennium. In 2002, however, they remained at the same level as the first year of the previous biennium.

135. The main donor countries in 2000-2001 were: Japan (22 per cent), Germany (11 per cent), Italy (10 per cent), Spain (10 per cent), Belgium (9 per cent), Finland (7 per cent), Ireland (5 per cent), the Netherlands (5 per cent) and Switzerland (3 per cent).

136. Most contributions were earmarked, except the contributions to SVF and the Japan Trust Funds. UNV reported that earmarking is not a problem per se. More important is the timely receipt of contributions from donors. During the UNDP annual review of the financial situation, 2000,[54] it was reported that contributions of some US$ 3.9 million for 2000 were received in 2001, most of them for full-funding arrangements. This amount represents 17 per cent of the contributions for the year.

137. Contributions from the private sector, foundations, international financial institutions and United Nations system agencies totalled US$ 1.7 million (5 per cent). Private-sector funding, though modest, has experienced an increase in recent years from six interventions in 2000 valued at US$ 90,000 to 25 missions in 2002 at US$ 345,000. This is an open avenue that should be further explored.

See Recommendation 11

Overhead

138. An additional source of income is the overhead charged to United Nations agencies and donors to cover administrative support costs. The overhead charges applied are as follows: 10 per cent of the direct costs of volunteers to United Nations agencies, 10 per cent for trust funds to donors (8.5 per cent for UNV and 1.5 per cent for UNDP country offices) and full-funding arrangements, and 8 per cent to DPKO. The lower rate applied to DPKO takes into account that part of the support services are provided by the mission and charged to the mission budget.

139. It appears that, while the overhead charged to DPKO is retained by UNV, all other overhead goes to UNDP and is recorded as an offsetting income against the part of the UNV biennial support budget financed by UNDP. In addition, the UNDP country offices charge UNV a flat rate of 2.5 per cent for all UNDP and non-UNDP funded volunteers. The rationale behind the different retentions by UNDP was not evident.

140. UNDP also received some US$ 560,000 in the last biennium for central services rendered to UNV by the Bureau of Management, the Office of the Administrator, the Office of the Audit and Performance Review and the Executive Board secretariat. This amount represented 8 per cent of total biennal support budget expenditures in 2001.

VIII. PROGRAMME MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

141. The results of UNV programme activities are presented every two years (even years) in the Report of the UNDP Administrator to the UNDP Executive Board. In addition, since 1998, UNV has produced an annual report with the objective of better informing its partners about major activities and developments during the year. The presentation follows the categories of the UNDP SRF, and not the specific goals of the UNV Business Plan. There are at least four other occasions in which UNV activities are presented/disseminated within the context of the UNDP reporting process in tandem with other UNDP

[54] DP/2001/22 of 25 July 2001.

activities, i.e. the Administrator's Annual Report, ROAR, MYFF progress report and the Annual Evaluation Report of the Administrator. In general, the thrust of these reports is informative; in the Inspector's view, for them to play a meaningful role they should be more analytical.

142. No effective mechanism exists to monitor, evaluate and measure the results and impact of UNV activities against established goals and objectives in the Business Plan. The implementation of the business plan is to be monitored quarterly during the SSMs. However, neither the frequency nor the content of the presentation to these meetings permitted regular and comprehensive performance monitoring. The management reports prepared for these meetings, basically Power Point presentations, contained useful information for management on very specific issues but little analysis of progress made towards implementing activities by objectives of the Business Plan. No analytical comprehensive periodic or annual report is produced to measure results against established goals in the Business Plan, and to determine reasons of failure or incomplete attainment and corrective actions. Lack of effective monitoring mechanisms, together with the absence of focus on a more manageable number of activities, resulted in delays in the implementation of certain projects and tasks, as pointed out on different occasions in this report.

143. The Evaluation Unit is responsible for arranging thematic and strategic evaluations of different aspects of the UNV programme. It prepares and disseminates guidelines for evaluations and ensures that general lessons are drawn from evaluations, are discussed and capacity created in the process.

144. Before 1998, the evaluation function at UNV had been weak. As already mentioned, in 1998, resources from the SVF were assigned to strengthen UNV evaluation capacity. Following this decision, UNV has undertaken a number of strategic and project reviews conducted by external consultants, involving beneficiary participation in the preparation and design of evaluations. During the 2000-2001 biennium, some US$ 380,000 from SVF was spent on evaluations. Three strategic evaluations and 23 project, thematic or country programme reviews and evaluations covering activities in almost 40 countries, were conducted by independent external consultants.

145. The issues looked into are identified through a consultative process with the participation of the operations sections and senior management. The Executive Coordinator makes the final selection and approval. All projects funded from SVF are also evaluated as well as trust fund projects, when the agreement with the donor so requires.

146. Evaluations are conducted on the basis of draft guidelines found in the UNDP handbook, "Results-oriented Monitoring and Evaluation". The completion of these guidelines, due for over three years, has been postponed to 2004.

147. UNV has no effective system for following up on the implementation of recommendations resulting from evaluations. A synthesis report of the results of all evaluations is prepared yearly, discussed among headquarters staff and disseminated in the field. In addition, the Head of the Evaluation Unit participates in the Project Appraisal Committee to ensure that new projects benefit from lessons learned from prior evaluations. Two important steps have been taken in 2003 towards the introduction of a follow-up system. First, a follow up matrix to track implementation of recommendations has been developed in hard copy and is at present being used for the first time in one country review. For this system to be efficient, however, given the high number and diversity of evaluations conducted, a database would have to be developed to track and report on the status of each recommendation. The Chief of the Evaluation Unit explained that the idea of developing a web matrix had been considered, but it was decided to wait for the implementation of the second wave of the ERP to see how much of it could be used for monitoring purposes. In the Inspector's view, the postponement of the implementation of such an important management tool should only be the result of an informed decision on how and when an alternative would be available.

148. Secondly, it was decided that from mid-2003, the Evaluation Unit would report to the SSM on the implementation of the Evaluation Plan and the status of follow-up to evaluations. This regrettably never happened, owing to time constraints. Such a review of the implementation of the 2002 Evaluation Plan

would have disclosed that of the 34 strategic, project and thematic evaluations planned, 62 per cent had been completed/were ongoing, the rest having been postponed/cancelled.

See Recommendation 12

149. Another evaluation modality of particular importance is the volunteer periodic reporting system. Obtaining feedback from volunteers who are instrumental in implementing UNV programme objectives is crucial for UNV. From another angle, the reporting system could serve to address the concern of some Member States and cooperating agencies regarding the need to better assess the impact of the volunteers work.

150. Following the discontinuation two years ago of the previous system, which was not very cost-effective and the subject of some criticism, a new system was finally introduced in April 2003. The new reporting system covers both long-term and short-term volunteers with contracts of more than one month. The system was tested by the end of the first reporting period in July 2003 and it is in the process of fine-tuning to make it more user-friendly. The new release is expected by January 2004. Compliance with the system definitely needs to be enforced, particularly for supervisors. The compliance rate at the time of the JIU review at the end of September 2003 was 35 per cent for volunteers and 10 per cent for supervisors. In a further step, the system will have to be adjusted for short assignments of less than one month.

See Recommendation 13

IX. OVERSIGHT

151. The oversight mechanisms of UNDP have competence over UNV. The United Nations Board of Auditors provides external oversight in connection with the biennial certification of UNDP accounts. A system is in place to report periodically to the UNDP Executive Board on the status of implementation of the recommendations made by the Board of Auditors.

152. UNDP/OAPR performs internal audit functions for UNV. The last internal audit was carried out six years ago in 1997. The 1997 OAPR audit was very useful. A follow-up plan was formulated and its implementation monitored. In recognition of the work done in implementing the recommendations of the audit, OAPR awarded UNV a certificate of appreciation.

153. It appears that prior to this exercise, no internal audit had been carried out in many years. The next internal audit of UNV was apparently foreseen for the current biennium but it has been postponed in view of the JIU review. It is recommended that a regular review cycle be established.

154. UNDP/OAPR also provides investigation functions, at the request of UNV or UNDP management or when evidence of wrongdoing is uncovered in the course of a routine audit. It is unclear, however, whether UNVs serving with other United Nations funds and programmes and specialized agencies fall under the purview of the relevant investigation service, as was recently the case with UNHCR. Pursuant to the terms of article 2.4 of the MOU with DPKO, "UN Volunteers are subject to the rules and procedures of the UNV programme in disciplinary matters. UN Volunteers are nevertheless required to cooperate fully with any investigation to be undertaken by the mission in any case in which he/she may be involved".

See Recommendations 14 and 15

Annex

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME (UNV)

Organizational Chart